

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 28, 2021

Approved 5-0 on 10/26/2021

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday September 28, 2021 at 6:00pm for the interviewing of Landscape Architects for the Spy Pond Playground/North Ramp and Parmenter School project.

Commission Members: Jen Rothenberg, Phil Lasker, Scott Walker, Leslie Mayer, Sarah Carrier and Shirley Canniff. Recreation Director Joe Connelly was also present.

The Commission interviewed seven firms. Each firm was given 15 minutes with 10 minutes dedicated to presentation and 5 minutes for question and answer with the Commission.

6:15 pm – Ray Dunetz

6:30 pm – Hedlund Design

6:45 pm – MLA

7:00 pm – CCLA

7:15 pm – KZLA

7:30 pm – Copley-Wolff

7:45 pm – Waterfield

This meeting ended at 8:05 pm.

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday September 28, 2021 at 8:05pm for regular business.

Commission Members: Jen Rothenberg, Phil Lasker, Scott Walker, Leslie Mayer, Sarah Carrier and Shirley Canniff. Recreation Director Joe Connelly was also present.

Anticipated Speakers: Adrienne Landry, Ellen Kravitz, Tom Robertson, Diane Welch (ACO), Captain Rich Flynn (APD), Elisabeth Carr-Jones

Speaking Members of the Public: Liz Reisberg, Anna Henkin

Preliminary Matter: Phil Lasker, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call. Mr. Lasker read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Mr. Lasker.

Open Forum – Public Comment

N/A

Correspondence Received: Menotomy MB Trail Building & Equity in Park Planning

Karen Brown – Hills Hill Trash

Karen Grossman – Friends of Spy – Ms. Landry reviewed the correspondence and request after the Menotomy discussion

- Mr. Connelly answered some of the questions but will inquire about the vacuuming schedule with DPW for the Spy Pond Path.

Process Discussion Regarding Menotomy Request to Extend Off Leash Hours in the Woods

Mr. Connelly reviewed the agenda item and both he and Mr. Lasker reviewed the discussions from the August 10th meeting. Mr. Lasker asked the Commission members to comment:

Ms. Rothenberg

- Public Hearing was necessary
- Had reservations given the amount of current non-compliances
- Believed education was a part of the problem
- Would like to see more compliance before expanding the program

Mr. Connelly

- Reviewed the history of the program and that some of the current rules/locations were a result of concessions and collaborations that came about in the public hearing process
- Public Hearing was necessary to hear all sides
- Shared examples of disrespect and non-compliance
- Would like to see self-policing from park users like there was when the program started

Ms. Canniff

- Agreed that a public process was necessary
- Had reservations given the current state of compliance

Ms. Mayer

- Stated that the Commission could change locations within the program but could not change hours as that was a Town Bylaw, this request was for location change not hour change

Mr. Walker

- Agreed with fellow commissioners and believed a public process was necessary for any modifications
- Respects the process that fellow commissioners and Mr. Connelly went through 11 years ago

Mr. Lasker

- Public process was necessary

Captain Flynn acknowledged that a problem does exist that makes it difficult on many parties and that APD is there to assist whenever and however possible.

Ms. Reisberg the proponent of the petition stated that she felt this was different than the original discussion because the program was already in place and that the request was for a slight modification and not a change to the times. Ms. Reisberg stated that she was an abutter and was in the park daily and did not see the issues that the Commission states they have witnessed or have been informed about. She is concerned with the Commission's current negative position about the request and worries that a public process may not be an open minded discussion.

The Commission stated their job was to listen and certainly they would be open minded to the feedback from the community.

Ms. Render stated she used the park daily and that she did not see off leash issues. She asked the Commission to consider that the feedback they have been receiving was negative because most people do not send positive feedback. This would be information attained through a public process.

The Commission continued to discuss the history of the program and the concerns that were raised. Ms. Reisberg again commented that shed did not want to open up program wide discussion but wanted to focus on the wooded area at Menotomy. Mr. Connelly stated that this was difficult to do and that he considered the issues intertwined.

Ms. Mayer motioned to table the discussion for a six month period to see if any improvements have been made, seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved 5-0.

The Commission did discuss what these changes might look like in six months in order to make a more informed decision. Mr. Walker asked that we also get input from FOMRP.

Ms. Rothenberg asked that it be in the record the chat conversation by Ms. Reisberg
“There are already dozens and dozens of well trained dogs already walking there creating an enforcement problem that may not be needed?”

Fishing Line in our Parks

Mr. Connelly introduced Ms. Kravitz to the Commission. Ms. Kravitz gave a powerful presentation of the concerns of fishing line left in our parks and water bodies as the Commission viewed pictures of some of the local issues. Ms. Kravitz summarized the safety concerns for both wild life and humans as well as the numerous environmental concerns. The Commission thanked Ms. Kravitz for bringing this to their attention. Captain Flynn also commented that he and the ACO are also aware of the issue. The Commission discussed possible solutions with Ms. Kravitz ranging from DPW/Tree Department assistance to the recruitment of volunteers. Ms. Henkin also reviewed the issues at Spy Pond and her concerns. Ms. Henkin asked if the Recreation Department could put up informational flyers at the park bulletin boards informing users of the issue.

Mr. Connelly suggested starting a community working group to investigate the issue and then report their recommendations back to the Park Commission, Conservation Commission, and Department of Public Works. Mr. Connelly will work on establishing this working group.

Robbins Farm Learning Garden Accessibility Report

Mr. Connelly introduced Ms. Carr-Jones. Ms. Carr-Jones reviewed the upgrades in accessibility with the Commission. Mr. Connelly and Ms. Mayer thanked the gardeners for all of their hard work and dedication to accessibility.

Town Wide Playground Wide Playground Accessibility Project Update

Mr. Connelly stated that all of the data was in the spreadsheet and that he would share it with the Disability Commission for feedback and then come up with a easy to read table for the website and brochure.

Special Request

The Commission approved a request from Tom Robertson for a concert at Robbins Farm on 10/9 from 4 pm to 7 pm as long as the Friends of Robbins are notified and that no money/donations are exchanged on site. Motion to approve by Ms. Rothenberg, seconded by Mr. Walker and approved 5-0.

Capital Projects Update

Mr. Connelly provided updates on the following capital projects:

Reservoir Phase II Site Work Project

Mr. Connelly reviewed updated from the project stating that the project is well on schedule for the 12/31 substantial completion

ADA Path Summer Street Complex

Mr. Connelly reviewed the project stating that all is complete with the planting of the three trees.

Public Hearings

Mr. Connelly gave a brief summary of both the Hurd and Hills Hill MB Public Hearing.

Conservation Commission Request for CPA Project from Park and Recreation for a Study of the McClennen Pond.

The Commission discussed this request. Ms. Mayer stated that after attending a recent CPA training she did not believe it was eligible under the current eligibility requirements. The Commission thought the project was also more operating expense related than capital and suggested the water body fund be used for this type of project. Mr. Connelly will report back to the Conservation Commission.

Approval of Minutes – 5/25/21, 8/10/21, 9/14/21

The minutes were tabled.

Comments and Items for Future Meetings

N/A

Ms. Canniff made the motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Ms. Rothenberg and motion was approved 5-0, at 11:05pm.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Joseph Connelly.